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ABSTRACT

The high national attrition rate among vocational education teachers (50 percent within 6 years) prompted a study to determine trade and industrial teachers' reasons for leaving and to make recommendations to increase teacher retention. Following a literature review of teachers' motivation and reasons for attrition, interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 18 male teachers in a Midwestern state, ages 36 to 61, who had voluntarily left trade and industrial teaching after 1 to 18 years. The study showed that one participant left because of a family or personal move and none left for retirement or sabbatical. Six left to pursue other career opportunities (business ownership), three for better salary or benefits, and eight because of dissatisfaction with teaching. The interviewees voiced an overall lack of support from school administrators, problems with unmotivated students, fear of legal consequences, school politics, low salaries, and frustration with educational bureaucracy as reasons for their dissatisfaction with teaching. The researcher recommended improvements in teacher education, especially through mentoring and licensure changes, as well as community-building in schools to increase teacher retention. (Contains 29 references.) (KC)

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On Retention of Secondary Trade and Industrial Education Teachers: Voices from the Field

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Introduction

A 1997 study released by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future included statistics in relation to both vocational and academic teachers. This report gave a painfully clear message of the need to reform teacher preparation and certification. More than 12 percent of all newly hired teachers enter the workforce without any training at all. Another 15 percent enter without having fully met state standards. More than 50,000 people who lack the training for their job enter the teaching profession each year on emergency or substandard licenses.

The rate of teacher retention specifically in vocational education is even more revealing. Of every 100 new vocational teachers, about 15 leave the profession after the first year and approximately 50 leave within six years (Heath-Camp & Camp, 1990). While such a high attrition rate is problematic, it is especially troubling when one considers that many of those leaving the teaching profession are the most gifted. An even more disturbing finding is that many of those most qualified to teach never enter the field (Odell & Ferraro, 1992).

This high attrition rate among vocational teachers is complicated when one specifically considers the field of trade and industrial (T & I) education. This field comprises about 20 percent of the secondary vocational teaching force (Lynch, 1997). T & I teachers who have both industry experience and pedagogical expertise are traditionally difficult to find (Walker, Gregson & Frantz, 1996). Vocational teachers who enter the profession directly from business

and industry with limited or no professional preparation face problems of a greater magnitude and have a more difficult time during the induction years (Camp & Heath, 1988).

Other factors that exacerbate this situation include:

- a) a severe shortage coupled with an increased demand in specific occupational areas of the field of secondary trade and industrial education exists (America's Teachers, 1993-1994; Lynch, 1996; Projections of Education Statistics, 1998; Roth, 1994);
- b) considerable resources at both the local and state levels are expended on beginning vocational teachers only to have them leave shortly after they have entered the teaching profession (Lynch, 1996); and
- c) high attrition rates among secondary T & I teachers negatively impact the respective students, programs and industries they serve (Lynch, 1996; Walker, Gregson & Frantz, 1996).

Clearly, this culminates in programs that may be inconsistent, students who are less than prepared to compete in a global marketplace, and teachers who are less than qualified and who suffer from stress and adjustment problems.

Background

Described as complex work characterized by simultaneity, unpredictability and multidimensionality, teaching is a difficult task. For decades, the transition from college supervised teaching to independent classroom teaching has posed problems for the beginning teacher (Johnson & Ryan, 1980). Requirements and expectations of independent classroom teaching are so numerous and varied that they overpower the novice teacher whose 'primary' concern to date has been 'presenting the lesson'. The literature is full of case studies and

anecdotes that reflect adjustment difficulties faced by teachers entering the profession. To complicate matters, most first year teachers tend to be both idealistic in their thinking about and unrealistic in their expectations of independent teaching. Consequently, many of these first year teachers become easily disillusioned and frustrated (Calliari, 1990). In addition, some suffer symptoms of heightened stress and anxiety (Johnson & Ryan, 1980).

Experienced teachers, who could be of assistance to novices, are often aging and habit-bound. Little social support is given to the new teacher which leads to feelings of dislocation and loneliness, of compromise and inadequacy – feelings that cause new teachers to question their commitment to teaching (Moran, 1990). Not wishing to appear incompetent, new teachers do not ask for assistance. This isolation is so common that some authors have dubbed education as ‘the profession that eats its young’ (Halford, 1998). Beginning teachers may have educational philosophies, which are simplistic and are expected to be responsive, responsible, vigorous, compassionate and competent *right now* with no latitude to adjust to a new environment (Moran, 1990).

Consider then being suddenly thrust into a classroom with little or no preparation for teaching or dealing with the myriad of issues that daily confront a teacher. Such is the case for those T & I teachers who are often alternatively or provisionally certified.

Trade and industrial education has more than a seventy-five year history of using a nontraditional or alternative approach to preparing its workforce. In the vast majority of instances, trade and industrial teachers do not have to follow the same teacher preparation or state certification rules, as do other teachers. These teachers are hired because of technical expertise and experience in a craft or a profession. Requirements are so dissimilar from state to state that there is no reciprocity among states. Because the words, vocational teacher education”

are not always the descriptors of such programs, it is difficult to determine which colleges and universities even offer vocational and technical teacher education (Lynch, 1996).

Camp and Heath (1988) have noted that beginning vocational teachers who enter the profession with certification based on occupational experience rather than through teacher education degree programs present unique challenges in terms of teacher induction. Without the benefit of teacher education and experiences such as student teaching, they are put directly into the classroom. Camp and Heath concluded that nontraditionally certified vocational education teachers need much more assistance than is frequently provided them, which only adds to the already challenging task of teaching. These teachers also face the struggle with a sense of professional identity.

There is a tendency for vocational education teachers to have less education and more work experience than academic teachers. This tendency is heavily concentrated in trade and industrial education that constitutes approximately 20 percent of the secondary vocational teaching force. Some 45 percent of trade and industrial teachers have less than a bachelor's degree. This is not like other vocational fields such as business, marketing or agriculture. However, secondary trade and industrial teachers do have more than twice as much occupational experience as other secondary vocational teachers – 17 years, as compared to eight years (Lynch, 1997).

As a general rule, in organizations (including schools) people make decisions based on the level of satisfaction or rather perceiving the positives to be greater than the negatives. No best solution exists in any given problem, but some solutions are more satisfactory than others. Teachers resolve the question of remaining in education through 'satisficing' rather than through optimizing. The result of frequent teacher turnover is the threatening of school reform efforts, a

continuing negative effect, and the perception that education is not valued by our society (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect a teacher's satisfaction. Intrinsic satisfaction can come from the psyche of the teacher and stem from daily activities within the classroom while extrinsic factors include salary, perceived support from administrators, school safety, and availability of school resources. Other factors that influence teacher satisfaction are supportive school environments, workplace conditions that are free from violence and recognition from administration of a job well done. A satisfied teacher, according to the literature, is one who can answer affirmatively to three decisions. Those decisions are:

1. If they could do it all over again (choose to be a teacher), they would.
2. They intend to keep teaching as long as they are able.
3. They strongly disagree that teaching is a waste of their time.

One of the main directions in teacher preparation is viewing both prospective and practicing teachers as active learning partners rather than as passive recipients of professional knowledge (Giroux, 1988). Teacher educators must begin to minimize lecture and role model the pedagogy necessary to promote student-centered classrooms as opposed to teacher-centered classrooms (Gregson, 1993). Teacher educators must be willing to return to the classroom in order to remain on the cutting edge. Teachers are professionals and when given the opportunity, will make responsible decisions about their growth and development (Edwards, 1995).

From the paradigm that trade and industrial education teachers are professionals and should be prepared and certified by the use of standards, one national organization has led the charge. The National Association of Industrial and Technical Teacher Educators (NAITTE) have proposed a set of teacher preparation and certification standards. Using these standards as a

benchmark and a method of determining common ground, a universally accepted level of proficiency for trade and industrial education teachers would emerge. Two types of NAITTE standards exist; one, which addresses the process of trade and industrial teacher education and another focusing on curriculum content and instructional aspects of preparation. Basic principles of adult education and the concept of lifelong learning come into play as courses are customized to meet the learner's needs basing them on life experiences. A multilevel professional development program (career ladder) for the continued growth and development of the teacher is proposed. Each level has increasing proficiency as well as additional education that are recognized by the completion of a formal degree. The culmination would be a master's degree with five years of successful teaching experience with permanent trade and industrial education certification, with state reciprocity (Frantz, Gregson, Friedenber, Walter, & Miller, 1996).

Farmer and Burrow (1990) suggest a similar, clinical approach to credentialing trade and industrial education teachers. Others such as McKibben (1988) identify the need for collaboration with state and local agencies, colleges, universities, and local education agencies. One unique characteristic of these clinical-based models is a differentiated staffing pattern using a field-based program. This pattern would allow a beginning teacher to not have total day in and day out responsibility of the classroom but rather be non-tenured with limited teaching responsibilities. The person would be used in non-instructional roles supporting other teachers until competence in core curriculum is certified. Then under the guidance of a master teacher, the beginning teacher would gradually begin taking a limited instructional role. This model would eliminate the reality that many current teachers have not had the opportunity to watch another teacher in action. Other roles involved in this concept are the vocational administrator and/or principal, and a teacher educator. With careful planning and coordination, a model such

as this could prove to be highly effective (Farmer & Burrow, 1990).

The kind of learning needed by beginning teachers cannot be separated from practice or from college classrooms. In essence, beginning teachers need a much different experience than their experience as students. Opportunities need to be provided for teachers to study, do, reflect, look closely at students and their work, collaborate with other teachers, and to share what they have seen. The 'rub between theory and practice' (Miller & Silvernail, 1994, p.6), will occur and be most productive when questions arise in the context of real students and work in progress, and where research and disciplined inquiry are also at hand (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Purpose of the Research

Directing this research study was the complex question of why secondary trade and industrial education teachers leave the teaching profession at a higher rate than any other group of vocational educators. Tremendous resources are spent at a local and state level to assimilate these teachers into the system but often with mixed results. As a vocational administrator, one of the biggest challenges in day-to-day implementation of effective teaching practices and supervision of faculty are those teachers who come directly from business and industry with no pedagogical basis upon which to function.

Methodology

Qualitative research is able to provide much more than pure numbers and statistical information. It enables both the researcher and the reader to examine the much deeper meanings of an individual's life experiences. The focus of sound research should be the question not the approach (Potter, 1996). Researchers who focus on the approach must continually translate their

question into the limitations of the approach and as a result, their answers are less insightful. However, if researchers focus primarily on the question, a greater contribution can be made. A great responsibility exists for researchers to use all research tools appropriately. "The more scholars in the field who are question focused, the less important the methods debate will become and the more interesting the insights about the phenomenon will be." (Potter, p. 332)

The 'gold standard' for qualitative research is the standard for ALL research; presenting a problem that has theoretical and/or practical significance in a believable and meaningful way (Miller & Dingwall, 1997, p. 25).

Qualitative research using a bounded case study was chosen as the method of research for the following reasons:

- (a) The desire of the researcher to view the phenomena of the high attrition rate of secondary trade and industrial education teachers holistically, and the knowledge that the phenomena is too complex to separate into factors (Wiersma, 1995, p. 211).
- (b) The researcher's concern to better understand human behavior and experience and the participants' perceptions of the vocational system and teaching in particular (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 38; Wiersema, 1995, p. 212).
- (c) Merriam (1998) stated that, "The most straightforward examples of 'bounded systems' are those in which the boundaries have a common sense obviousness" (p. 46). This population is bounded by several characteristics. These include; the level of teaching is secondary, the field is vocational, the specialty is trade and industrial education and the situation for leaving is voluntary rather than non-renewal of teaching contract.
- (d) Usually qualitative research involves data collection from multiple sources such as interviews, observations and document analysis. In this particular study, only interviews

have applicability. Observations are not possible as the participants are no longer teaching and document analysis would have no relevance on the research questions (Merriam, 1988, pgs. 35-52; 67-69).

Qualitative researchers report the outliers, the deviant, the abnormal, the atypical cases as well as those considered to be typical or normal. The issue of generalizability then becomes not if the findings are transferable but rather to which settings and which respondents (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 32-33). The reasons trade and industrial education teachers leave the profession may or may not be the same reason health teachers, elementary public school teachers or higher education professors leave.

In 1993, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published *America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession*. The researcher used a 1997 follow-up report issued by NCES that contained two major surveys; 1993-1994 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS: 93-94) and the 1994-1995 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS: 94-95).

The SASS report is a coordinated set of questionnaires that collected data from schools, principals, teachers, and school districts regarding school and district enrollments, programs and staffing policies; teacher supply and demand; principals' and teachers' demographic characteristics, education, and professional qualifications; and teachers' workloads and working conditions. The TFS report is a one-year follow-up of all teachers who were sampled in the previous SASS who left the teaching profession, all who moved, and a subsample of those who continued to teach in their 1993-1994 schools. Together the two reports offer the most significant source of national-level data on teachers and teaching.

The researcher used two parts of the TFS in the data analysis. One part detailed the percentage of leavers who left teaching for various reasons and the other dealt with leavers who left because they were dissatisfied with teaching and the reasons they gave for their departure.

Population and Sample

The population was secondary trade and industrial education teachers in a midwestern state in the United States who had left the teaching profession voluntarily rather than under duress. The researcher assigned pseudonyms to the participants in order to add "humanness". Two different methods were used to obtain names of those individuals.

The first method was the sending of a letter with a self-addressed stamped envelope to vocational administrators throughout the state. Thirty letters were sent by United States mails with 25 responses received. Two individuals did not submit names perceiving that to do so would violate the privacy rules concerning personnel. A letter was sent to each of these two individuals further explaining the research study and confidentiality procedures. No response was received from these two individuals.

The second method was to contact the state-level agency that has the responsibility for supervision of these teachers. Names were submitted by the state program administrator for the trade and industrial education division and a long-time administrative assistant and the two lists were combined and checked for duplication. A total of 33 names were obtained in a purposefully selected sample.

Of the original 33 names, the following transpired: 19 interviews were conducted; one individual was scheduled twice to be interviewed but did not show up either time; five could not be located; one was located and repeated phone calls made but no response; three had moved out of state and were not able to be located, four were located but chose not to participate. The

four individuals who chose not to participate did so because of fear of repercussion within their trade.

Data Collection

Face-to-face interviews, although more time and resource intensive, were used as the method of data collection for several reasons. Because the participants were no longer teaching, it was impossible to observe these teachers in their work setting or to replicate past events. The use of interviews also allowed to explore in depth certain issues, ask for clarification when needed, be flexible to meet the needs of the participants as well as give the opportunity for individuals who don't express themselves well in writing to tell their stories. Permission was granted by the participants to have the interview recorded verbatim. The depth and vividness gained by this method could not have been gained in any other method.

Part I of the interviews was highly structured to gain demographic information. Part II combined two techniques of interviewing. The semi-structured technique was used as specific, already formed questions were asked according to the interview schedule. Unstructured questions followed in order to clarify and gain new information and allow fresh insights to emerge. Linguists call such exchanges 'conversational repairs' as the researcher strives to make the interview as clear as possible (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

All of the participants seemed eager and willing to tell their stories. The interviews seemed to serve as a form of self-analysis for them as well as an opportunity to clarify their own thoughts and experiences. Although some participants became very emotional and upset at times during the interviews, efforts were made to bring closure and a sense of completeness as the interviews concluded. In one case, the participant had prepared an index card of notes to be certain to remember all of the points he wanted to make. The emotions stirred by the interviews

surprised the participants at times as well as the relief at being able to "tell the story". Rubin and Rubin describe stories as "refined versions of events that may have been condensed or altered to make a point indirectly." (p. 231) Using Rubin and Rubin's analysis of the characteristics of stories, the researcher recognized those as such. These stories had common characteristics. They were told smoothly using familiar lines and were often adventures. They usually described a dramatic event and were reflected by a change in the speaking tone. At times the story appeared to not answer the question but reflection showed that the story was used to answer a difficult or even threatening question.

As part of the scheduling of interviews, a mutually convenient location and time were selected. Each participant's location was different. In several instances participants requested to meet in a location besides the location for their work or home. Reasons expressed for their requests were the small town atmosphere and the possibility of repercussions from former schools or political concerns. Ten participants chose their work location or office as the setting for the interview. Four of these work locations were manufacturing plants or factories. One was held in an executive office of an urban manufacturing plant; two were held in an industrial development area of urban locations. One was held in an unused office of a manufacturing plant. The remaining six interviews held at the participant's workplace varied from a classroom of a training facility to the participant's office at a school district building. In four instances, the interviews were held at the business owned by the participant. These locally-owned businesses were an air conditioning business in a downtown shopping area, a camera shop in the process of liquidation in a strip mall shopping area, a computer shop in a small shopping plaza and a rural machine shop adjacent to the participant's residence.

Six interviews were held at eating/entertainment establishments. One was a small

restaurant in a rural community in southwestern area of a midwestern state, one at a Chinese restaurant, and one at Denny's in a metropolitan area adjoined to a highly traveled interstate highway. One interview was conducted at a favorite American food restaurant in an adjoining town to the participant's place of employment. One was conducted at a bar and saloon on a popular street in a university town and one was completed at a sports grill in a metropolitan city in an adjacent state. The remaining two interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. In both instances the participants' families were present.

Nineteen individuals were interviewed and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. One participant was eliminated after the interview was conducted. This participant had taught three years and at the end of the third year, his contract was not renewed. He obtained legal representation and sought to keep his teaching position. As a result of these events, his profile did not meet the one for this particular study and his responses were disallowed.

All 18 participants were male (see Table 1). The participants' ages when interviewed ranged from 36 years to 61 years of age; the mean age was 46.38 years. The number of years taught ranged from 1 to 18 years; the mean of years taught was 6.64 years. Using the preceding information, the researcher calculated the age of the participants when they left teaching. The age of the participants when they left teaching ranged from 28 years to 54 years; the mean age of the participants when they left teaching was 41.17 years.

The instructional programs taught by these former teachers were varied. While this makes the text more challenging, the researcher uses the common name used by the participants for their program in order to remain true to the interviews. For example, the participant refers to the program he taught as "auto body", while the state agency uses the term of "automotive collision repair technology". This principle is used throughout the research study. Three

participants taught air conditioning. Diesel, auto body, machine tool and printing were programs taught by two participants each. The remaining programs were carpentry, powerline technology, computers, welding and computerized numerical control (CNC).

Educational attainment varied from some college to a master's degree. Seven participants had some college; three had A.A.S. degrees. Five had completed a B.S. degree with three participants who added a master's degree to their educational attainments. All participants held some type of teaching certificate ranging from provisional to a standard. Many of the participants also held national certification credentials appropriate to their trade.

The issue of entry into the teaching profession was included with the use of probing questions. Eight participants became teachers because they were recruited into teaching. Six participants were recruited by an acquaintance, peer or a friend, his brother who was already a teacher recruited one and his former technology center instructor recruited one. Four participants first began teaching night classes before they moved to the daytime programs. Desiring to change where they lived and to be closer to family and friends was the stimulus for two participants. In two cases, participants felt unfulfilled and burned out and decided to make the career change to teaching. One participant taught first in a private technical college.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative data analysis was to organize the interviews and present a narrative that explains what happened or provide a description of the norms and values that underlie cultural behavior. The first step of data analysis began during the interviews when questions were rephrased for clarification. After the initial two or three interviews, the researcher chose to revise and modify questions that had seemed unclear or confusing to the participants.

The second step in data analysis was the coding phase that to some degree is continuous throughout the process. The data was reread and divided into smaller categories while looking for common themes. Concepts were recognized in several ways. Vivid vocabulary that is unique to the profession and that sounds different from the ordinary vocabulary was identified. Nouns and noun phrases often repeated also was an indicator of an important idea as well as those words clearly opposite of those nouns and noun phrases.

The data was coded, grouping participants' responses using a numerical coding system following the idea of domain analysis. Themes were identified from the coded data. Both compatible and contradictory concepts emerged as people in different circumstances interpreted their world. Each cluster then became a major coding category; the individual themes and ideas were treated as subcategories. The final stages of data analysis included building toward overarching themes, letting people understand what happened, and stimulating theoretical and practical concerns about why things happened.

Findings

Using the TFS survey (see Figure 1), the researcher compared all participants' responses for leaving teaching with those of the survey (see Table II). The most prominent reason given was used for comparison although the researcher fully realized that two or more reasons could be connected. For example, participants jointly mentioned 'Pursuing other career opportunities' and 'Better salary or benefits'. In some instances, the participant pursued other career opportunities in order to obtain a better salary or benefits.

The second part of TFS dealt with leavers who left because they were dissatisfied with teaching and the reasons they gave for their departure. In order to capture all relevant data, the researcher recorded every reason given by the participant in a category rather than limiting their

reason(s) to just one category. The reasons stated by the participants for leaving are intertwined. The researcher felt a responsibility to report a compilation of all responses to provide the total picture. Because of including all responses and not limiting participants to giving only one reason for leaving teaching, it was not possible to analyze the participants' responses and calculate comparable percentages.

Reasons Participants Left Teaching

TFS gives five reasons why teachers left the teaching profession: family or personal move, retirement or sabbatical, pursue other career opportunities, better salary or benefits, and dissatisfaction with teaching. The research study showed that one participant left because of a family or personal move and none for retirement or sabbatical. Six left to pursue other career opportunities, three for better salary or benefits and eight because of dissatisfaction with teaching. Of the six that left to pursue other career opportunities, the researcher found all of the participants pursuing business ownership.

Sub-Categories for Reasons Dissatisfied Teachers Left Teaching

Once a teacher is dissatisfied and decides to leave teaching, the TFS gives eleven specific reasons for their departure with the frequency percentage distribution. For the purposes of this article, only the top four main reasons will be discussed. The percentage distributions will be given according to TFS and stories illustrating the researcher's findings will be told. The top reasons given for leaving teaching are lack of recognition and support (31.6%), student discipline problems (16.6%), poor student motivation (15.5%) and poor salary (10.3%).

Lack of Recognition and Support

Lack of recognition and support was cited in numerous ways such as unclear leadership in their responsibilities, the administration's lack of interest in their program, and an

unwillingness to provide needed technical support as well as dealing with student discipline and motivation problems. Andrew James said,

I taught for five years, and the first two were probably really good, as far as my satisfaction doing my teaching, but after the first year, they hired another teacher, Charles Brooker, to do some other things, and at that point in time, it was kind of hard to figure out who was responsible for what, and we just didn't have a lot of direction as far as what the responsibilities were. . . I could see the handwriting on the wall. You know, it was, you know, the evaluations for the first probably three or four years were pretty generic and pretty noncommittal on anything, and the last year, I could really tell, I mean they were nit-picking every little thing. . . So I could tell at that time things were going downhill pretty quick, and I'd better start looking around and find something to get out of there pretty quick.

Trade and industrial teachers interviewed felt they were craftsmen first and then teachers. When their expertise was not recognized and they were pushed to become a teacher, they felt unappreciated. According to Lee Sellars,

This is probably the one very important reason I left. The professional development for me as a teacher was all banked into the education department. You are going to become a teacher now. But see I am an engineer and they had to come to me as an engineer to get someone capable of doing the training that was necessary for industry. Not to a teacher.

A change in administration and a lack of emphasis on the instructional area led Keith Moss to leave teaching. The rural farming area provided the need for his diesel program but his program was closed to begin one in antique cars because of the administrator's interest.

It was like a tornado blew into town. A man that was newly hired on, wanted to close the program. And so when I found that out, I thought I better start doing something where I knew I would have income. And so I talked to the administration about it. No, and they said that the enrollment wasn't that good. We are going to close it to start this other program. In that same shop, and that is what happened . . . The last year I had 16 students in the morning and 14 in the afternoon. So, I didn't personally think that enrollment was the problem. I just think that they wanted to change to antique auto.

When complaints and questions went unanswered, Lee Sellars questioned the level of support. He cited this example.

Getting administration to just listen to what I wanted to do. Getting funding and things like that. Having a handle on your budget. As an engineer I have always known what we are going to do and how much money we have to do it. So I can tailor what I wanted to do with the budget that was available. There was {sic} no answers in that area at all. You didn't know what your funding was going to be, what equipment you could get, things like that, it was very frustrating, you knew there was {sic} shortcomings in the lab, machinery you wanted to get in there, training equipment you wanted, but you couldn't prioritize.

In Ryan Evan's case, his wife taught at the same school and lost her job when she refused to support the candidate endorsed by the administration. Describing the politics and lack of support to have a different political choice, he said:

The biggest experience I had with that was at Southland. And the superintendent had a clear choice in the political race, and you're expected to line up and support that person and I don't agree with that. So, and to be real honest with you. She was told to support his choice. She said she wasn't going to, and it cost her her job after 16 years of working there.

Harry Stephens described the technology center where he taught as not recognizing the knowledge and expertise of the faculty and as result, not being supportive of the faculty.

Speaking of discussion with his supervisor at a faculty meeting he said:

Well, Bill, I guess my biggest problem is that you're not listening to what I am saying. If you don't want an answer, why did you ask the question? Why are you trying to openly ridicule me right here in front of all these teachers?

He also described the work environment as a "Club Med." He said, "It seems as though it's a Club Med. If you're in the club, you're in the club. But if you're not, we'll use you for as long as we need you, and then you're out of here."

Chris Farley felt that the administration did not understand the complexity of his job because they had not taught in a trades-related program.

Having 30 different students at 30 different levels asking 30 different questions and needing 30 different answers every day. I had a hard time with my administration, not the head guy, but the assistant guy, because he had never taught at the vo-tech level; and he didn't know what it was like to have those questions. And he didn't have a trade, he came from public education. And he didn't have a trade; so he couldn't relate.

Others saw the lack of support in the manner that faculty members were treated and the trust level between faculty and administration. Ed Harmon saw the lack of trust evidenced by a "punch the clock" mentality.

The thing that irritated me more than anything else is that that particular school says you will be here until 5:00 p.m.! I have, I can be responsible for my actions. You know, I'm used to being in management where I make the decisions. I have enough knowledge in my field that no one can snow me, and yet I get treated like I don't know what's going on.

Lee Sellars saw a similar work environment and used manufacturing terms to describe his reaction by saying:

The product you manufacture is education, the most important people that are supposed to be involved in that are supposed to be teachers. I didn't feel like the administration really cared what the teachers did.

In his business, Bob Brown asks his employees every week how things are going but certainly did not experience the same question when teaching.

Nobody ever sat down and said, "Hey, how are things going? What do, is anything we need to do, do you got any problems?" I was never asked that once. That is kinda a sore spot for me. Because every week, I talk to my employees, I say, he we are on a team, if there is something we can do better by you telling me or that kind of thing, tell me about it.

Lee Sellars couldn't understand how an administrator could know about a program and support it, if they had never spent time in the program.

Most of all, I had a few complaints and I didn't feel like those complaints were addressed. For example, my boss was never even in my program. not even one time. He is supposed to be the principal of the school and I didn't feel like he was really involved in what was actually going on with the school. He was more involved with other projects, which had nothing

to do with what we were trying to do.

Lee came to the conclusion that he had to leave because he was becoming something he did not want to be. He explained by saying:

I wanted to do things. I didn't want to become the teacher that was, do just what is required and that is it. And that was one of the things that made me decide to well. . . I will be back in industry where performance is expected and accepted. The more you can do, you ask for support you will get it. Where there (at the school) you didn't know what you would get. You know.

Willie Dodd saw the lack of support in passing the buck between administrators when questioned by faculty.

Well, what I saw was a lot of smiles up front, but stab {sic} you in the back. You know, I got ripped on a couple of times on things, and then you couldn't tell who was responsible. They'd pass the buck, well, so and so did this, and so and so did that.

Other participants viewed the lack of support as pertaining to legal aspects of their job.

Lee Sellars stated it in this way:

Another thing that really bothered me was the litigation risk. Anything you would be involved with in a conflict with a student of any type, the school would immediately clam up and you were on your own. Whereas when I worked in industry, and the corporations I worked for, would back me up on problems. As I didn't feel that if there was ever a problem between a student and me and I couldn't handle it, a need for litigation or lawyers or anything like that, the school wouldn't have backed me up. And that was a pretty important thing. The first thing when I got there, you got to get this insurance. You could be involved in some kind of problem with a student and you will have to hire lawyers and so that was something that really bothered me. Luckily I never had any problems, or any students injured or anything like that even though we were in a highly industrial type training. Where there are machines that could easily hurt someone. There is a risk of injury in that type of teaching. I cited this before, a lack of administrative support. Generally it was hard to get anything done. Anything I asked for was just . . . I finally just quit asking for anything at all. I don't care what the administration does, I am down here doing my thing and they are doing their things and that is kinda a bad thing.

Student Discipline

Student discipline and lack of support were closely connected in the perceptions of the participants. Often when a participant would mention one, he would mention the other.

Tom Richards, while teaching his first and only year, had this experience:

The kids were pretty rowdy. It was hard to make them behave. To make them do what you wanted them to do. The discipline. It was hard to do that. For example, they would get up on the top of the paint booth while I was helping other kids and they would get up there and smoke and do things they weren't supposed to do. I had some that got in fights and just a lot of problems.

The issues of student discipline increased when the teacher followed another teacher who did not enforce a code of behavior in the program. Willie Dodd followed another teacher who was "just playing playhouse". He said:

These kids were doing all, no structure, weren't studying anything. They hated me right off the bat, my students, because I came in there teaching it the way I understood I was gonna be doing it. To industry standards. We're gonna learn something. And I had all kinds of hell. I mean, the first two weeks, I didn't know that I was gonna make the transition.

Bob Brown found one of the most effective methods to be to take students outside and talk to them privately and ask them why they were in class and what was their purpose in class. This seemed to help students refocus. Chris Farley had the most difficulty with the "adult wanna-bes." The name was coined for these students who were right out of high school and weren't really adults yet. To Chris, the "adult wanna-bes" were his biggest problem. Participants did recognize that with additional years of experience perhaps the issue of student discipline would not have been a factor.

Poor Student Motivation

For many of the participants, a strong relationship existed between the amount of

motivation the student had and the need for external discipline. Participants struggled with trying to help all students; in some cases, even when the student did not ask or want to be helped. Others felt that because of constraints on their time they were not able to devote the needed attention to a student. Knowing that such a lack of motivation would not be tolerated in the workplace caused some participants to decide to leave teaching. Greg Thacker saw the lack of motivation in this light:

Probably the biggest challenge was handling the students. You know, there was a challenge in presenting the information, but the classes helped you with that, and you learned how to do that. But the biggest challenge were the students that really needed a lot of one on one. It was challenge to take a student who really didn't wanna be there, and make them wanna be there. Make them enjoy coming to the school instead of dreading the next three hours.

Chris Farley cited the lack of student motivation specifically as one of the main

Reasons he left teaching. He said:

A lot of it was, I felt like there were too many kids that really didn't want to learn. They were just there to be there. A free hour or a free half-day or whatever it was . . . I thought about it. It was a hard decision. I debated. I would like to have stayed sometimes. Other times I am glad I got away from it. I enjoyed working with kids. It just seemed like there was too many of them that just didn't care if they learned or not. There were those that did and that probably made up for it. I guess.

Gabe Little shared this concern and discussed dealing with students who really did not want to be there. He said, "The majority of students weren't interested. You only had a handful out of the class that was really interested in what you were teaching. And that was the hardest part.

Low Salaries

Both in the practice and in the literature, low salaries are often given as the reason T & I teachers leave the profession. The researcher found this to be true. Life-altering circumstances

such as divorce or death of a family member led participants to choose a job with a higher income. William Stout chose to quit teaching in need of a higher salary. He cited:

It was mainly all the pay scale that has to go along with it. But at the same time, That was a pay scale that I negotiated when I first went in on the board, too, so I really couldn't have any complaints about it. It's just that at that time, with the divorce, personal problems and things like that, with that in mind, it was more a personal deal and not a school deal as far as why, anything like that.

Brad Davidson saw poor salaries as a detriment to attracting skilled individuals to teaching. He said:

We are not paid near what we need to be paid. We're not gonna be able to attract the quality educators with the background, technical backgrounds, we're out there competing with industry, and we're not doing a very good job of it. We're gonna have to get that salary up. There was, well, I was offered a job at a technology center and one at another location and both of them were over \$10,000 a year more than I was making at my school.

Accustomed to receiving merit raises or bonuses in industry, Bob Brown struggled with across the board raises.

That is one of the things that drives me crazy with the way they operate. It is not normal with everything else in the real work world. I am glad you asked me that. They are preaching we want good employees and all of the things that we are doing is to get a good employee and who has a little knowledge about the trade. Employers say they will train the people. O.K. That is fantastic. I believe that. But they don't operate their business as a learning situation. It is not merit raises. It is just, "Hey, we got some money this year", let's give everyone a \$1,000. It is not a good employee deal. It is we got money or we don't. If they had come to me and said, "We will give you \$5,000 a year." That might have been a factor in the thing. As I said my consideration is the well being of my family.

Willie Dodd probably summed it up most succinctly of all the participants when he said:

To me, this is personal opinion, money is a token of respect. It should be based on what I do, and if I'm not any good, then don't pay me. But if I'm very good, then pay me according to that. I do a lot better for that than I do for hand clapping.

Having no control or any influence over school policies caused several participants to

leave teaching. When both secondary and adult students were in the same program and it became problematic, participants resented not being able to change the school policy. Often when a school policy was inconsistently enforced, participants felt that the real world experience for students was being compromised.

Others wanted the opportunity to progress up the career ladder within the school and felt stifled professionally. Accustomed to business having a working mission and vision of where they were headed, participants felt that because the administration didn't have a clear vision they could not be proactive. Also emphasizing unimportant things proved to be frustrating for most of the participants. Paperwork, endless meetings, strict dress codes and lack of planning were sources of disappointment and finally disillusionment. One participant expressed his surprise at the slowness of the system,

One of the bad challenges, I guess was being able to go from an industrial setting where if I needed something, I got on the phone and said, I needed it yesterday, and it was being hot-shotted there, to being in a classroom situation to where if you needed something, it was, you know, fill out a requisition and go through the paperwork, and this is one of the big problems with all T & I teachers is that they all get really exasperated at this. And I understand, there is a system you have to follow. I understand that. It's state money, it's public money, and so forth. But it's a large adjustment problem to go from that situation. We have a lot of large pieces of equipment, and if they break, you know, you really can't wait a month or two months to get the parts to fix it, because you're in a training schedule, and everything is scheduled to where this follows this, follows this. And it's very difficult to teach in that kind of situation.

Another participant described this slowness as "bureaucratic inertia". He strongly believed that he wanted to change things and had neither the resources nor support to do so.

The remaining categories were lack of control over classroom, lack of teaching time, lack of preparation time, lack of resources and materials, and large class size. These were mentioned infrequently and the participants perceived that these items would take care of themselves if the first items were adequately addressed and resolved.

Discussion

Several recommendations for practice emerged from the study. For administrators supervising secondary programs, they would do well to remember that not only are teachers teaching some students who are a volatile time of their lives (adolescence) but that teachers also undergo major personal life changes that affect their teaching experience. The ability to obtain competent mental health services as well as formal and informal efforts to recognize their work as a teacher would ease the stress of teaching while experiencing changes in one's personal life. Developing methods to allow non-teacher education teachers to gain needed credentials and certificates without highlighting the differences in certifications would be helpful.

The Supervisory Behavior Continuum suggested in Supervision of Instruction by Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (1995) has practical applications. Developmental supervision provides teachers with as much initial choice as they are ready to assume, then fosters teachers' decision-making capacity and expanded choice over time. New teachers would benefit from the clusters of behaviors with minimum teacher responsibility and maximum supervisor responsibility. As the teacher gains experience and expertise, the supervisor could move to less responsibility with the teacher assuming greater responsibility. The developmental supervisor can change supervisory behaviors in order to adapt to a change in the teacher or group's situation.

The traditional teacher education track should consist of internships that begin in the third semester and gradually become longer in length with student teaching being the culmination. A professional growth plan should be in place as well as emphasis on skills to practice reflective analysis and use of journals. Teacher educators and state supervising staffs should spend one week every three years teaching in the classroom to remain current in the profession.

Both traditional teacher education and alternative teacher education should focus on implementation of the National Association of Industrial and Technical Teacher Educators (NAITTE) teacher preparation and certification standards. A multilevel professional development program (career ladder) would allow for continued growth and development of quality teachers. This model would allow teacher to progress through three levels of certification with the culmination of a master's degree with five years of successful teaching experience with permanent trade and industrial education certification, with state reciprocity.

All methods of teacher education would include a professional growth plan that includes needed certification (s), demonstration of competence and licensure requirements. All teachers would be assigned to a mentor teacher and participate in a teacher network using technology to communicate with each other.

Quality teacher education would, regardless of which track, do the following:

- Lead teachers to successful certification as a Board Certified Teacher through NBPTS, appropriate licensure, and demonstration of occupational competence,
- Incorporate throughout the process the human element of teaching, the 'heart of teaching',
- Provide an intellectually sound and challenging program of study,
- Realize differences in the knowledge, skill and commitment among teachers,
- Create working partnerships between schools and universities, teachers, administrators, and college faculty and
- Assist in building a learning community in the school for teachers and students.

The school would have a clearly stated vision and mission that impacts day-to-day operation of the school. Blocks of time and adequate resources to accomplish professional growth goals would be provided. Extensive use would be made of mentors, small collaborative groups and

teacher networks. Teaching consultants would also be available as needed. New methods of teacher evaluation would be used that include peer reviews, self-review and administrative reviews. Recognition of the impact of the career stages of teachers would exist. First year teachers would be supplied with a "handbook" that gives pertinent information such as meanings of acronyms, who to call for what, and everything a new vocational teacher needs to know. First year teachers also would have a planning period and no additional or extra duties for the first few years.

Licensure is instituted to protect the public from harm; therefore, it is critical that we define competent beginning teaching in a way that satisfies this charge. If teachers come to the teaching/learning enterprise with an inadequate knowledge base, they place their students at risk of educational failure. Teacher education and induction programs must be restructured to ensure that beginners have an adequate knowledge base before they take on full-time responsibility. Licensure assessments must act as a catalyst to improve teaching, not as just a reflection of the status quo. Across the nation, the areas represented in trade and industrial education are experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. Unless efforts are made to slow the attrition rate of these teachers, schools will also suffer from a shortage of skilled, qualified trade and industrial education teachers prepared to train the next generation of skilled workers.

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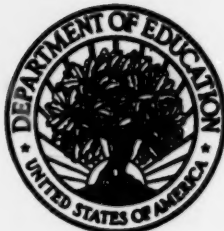
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